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APRIL 27-MAY 10, 2017

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APRIL 27-MAY 10, 2017 | **ISSUE 572**

CONTENTS

LAVENDER

FEATURE: SPORTS & FITNESS

20 Inside The Saint Paul Athletic Club
24 2017 Community Sports Directory
26 Kicking the Walls Down - Kickball
30 Bump & Grind - Gravel Cyclist
32 The Lady is a Champ - Weightlifting

OUR LAVENDER

8 From the Editor
10 A Word in Edgewise
11 Lavender Lens
37 Lavender Lens

OUR SCENE

16 Arts: Spotlight

OUR HOMES

34 Ride Review

OUR RESOURCES

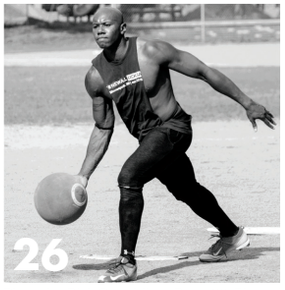
40 The Network
41 Classifieds
42 Community Connection

OUR VOICES

38 Dateland









Page 20: Photo by Hubert Bonnet, Page 16: Photo by Rick Spaulding, Page 26: Photo by Jen J. Lindquist, Page 34: Photo by Randy Stern.

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ON THE COVER

Sports and fitness are a source of fun and health for so many in this community. Read all about Stonewall Kickball and how they do good for others as well.
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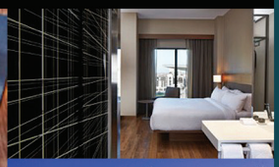


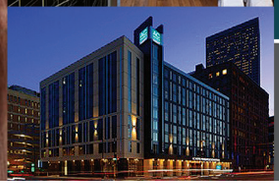
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FROM THE EDITOR | BY ANDY LIEN

Belonging

I was at an event at the American Swedish Institute in Minneapolis the other day. I was a guest of my friend whose house was being featured by AIA Minnesota, so I was just there to enjoy myself and watch a program about houses and design. As we were chatting with other attendees, my friend referenced me when talking about the Swedish Institute. He said, "She belongs here." They were just a few words, but they really tickled me. He meant that I'm a member of the American Swedish Institute; my friend is familiar with my membership because I often bring him to events there. But do I "belong?" Yes. I think I belong there. They're my people and I find myself in many of the enriching programs they bring to their members.

When thinking about this sports and fitness issue, it's clear that people belong to teams. People belong to this community. People belong to each other. Membership matters. But not all membership looks the same. By going inside The Saint Paul Athletic Club, you'll see what awaits you as a member who belongs. You'll read about how cyclist Pamela Gonzales might be grinding gravel in northern Minnesota as an individual, but everyone who participates in a particular event is looking out for each other. Weightlifter Jackie Gleason lifts a certain amount of weight by herself, but she's training and being spotted and supported by a small village of people. The Stonewall Kickball team is very clear in their league profile that there's something for everyone to do as a member of their league, from playing to sitting on the bench or helping in some other way. And then there's a whole directory of sports leagues and teams in this issue that lays out who is doing what and when, so you can consider joining them.

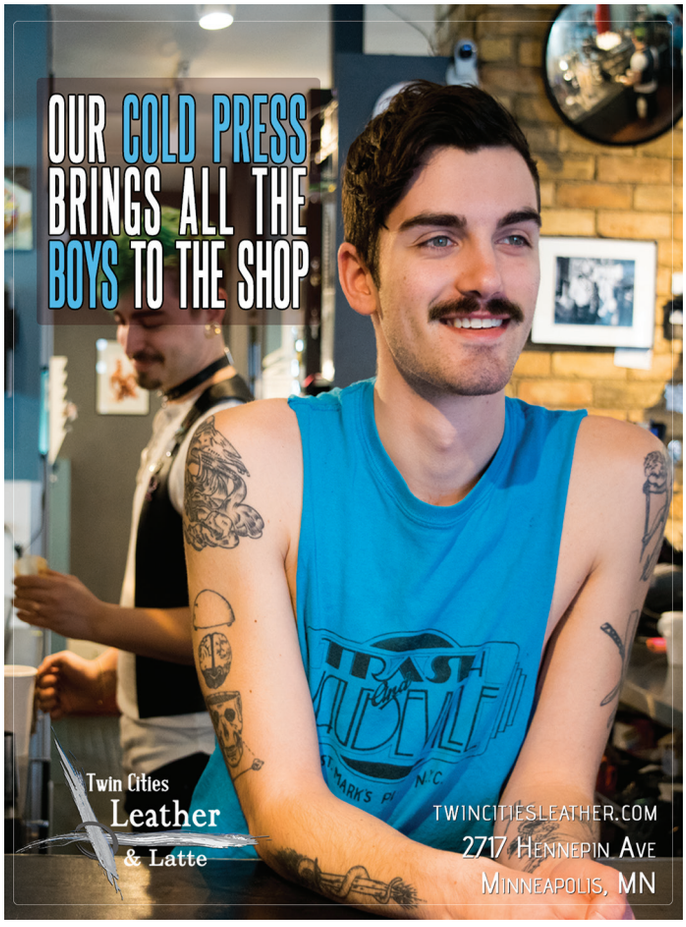
It's more than sports and fitness. Yes, there are organized games and practices. There is strategy. There are roles. There are rules. And there is also the feeling that comes along with working toward a goal. The rush of achieving something with other people. When I sing in a choir, there's nothing I love more than rehearsing something in parts and then hearing us put it together as a whole. What a natural high. In sports and fitness, there is exertion and coordination, not to mention skills that you can teach as well as learn. I recently figured out that I shy away from doing things that are hard or unfamiliar, because that puts them in a negative light for me. That I should know how to do a triple lutz in ice skates or I shouldn't bother trying. Nonsense. The people in this issue are proof that you can join in and start wherever you are; a newcomer or a polished athlete.

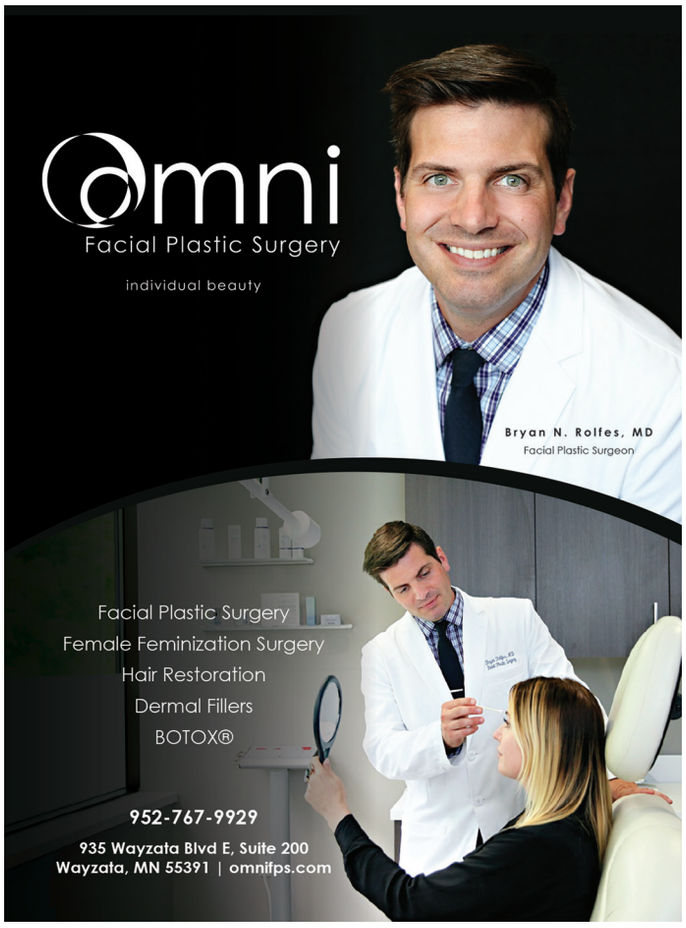
And, just like in this community, you will belong.

With you and with thanks,

Andy ■









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A WORD IN EDGEWISE | BY E.B. BOATNER

Rights, Privileges, and Luck of the Draw

There are some folks who claim that other folks don't have the "right" to things: clean air, water, the pursuit of a dignified, safe life. The naysayers have a point, but not the one they intend.

For example, baby hawksbill turtles don't have the "right" to make it from the sand to the sea, and the very stars grow cold, go nova, are gobbled up by rapacious black holes. One day, out of the blue in the late Cretaceous, dinosaurs lost all right to existence when a six-mile-wide asteroid slammed into what is now Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula at 44,000 miles per hour, precipitating one of the globe's Great Dyings. (The first occurred some 444 million years ago in the Ordovican period.)

Even before man discovered how to personally hasten his own demise, the Earth's natural cycles of heat and cold, wet and dry (punctuated sporadically by asteroids and volcanic eruptions) rendered life at even the cellular level pretty much a matter of the luck of the draw. In truth, as far as the cosmos is concerned, we continue to exist at the whim of the next random chunk of rock.

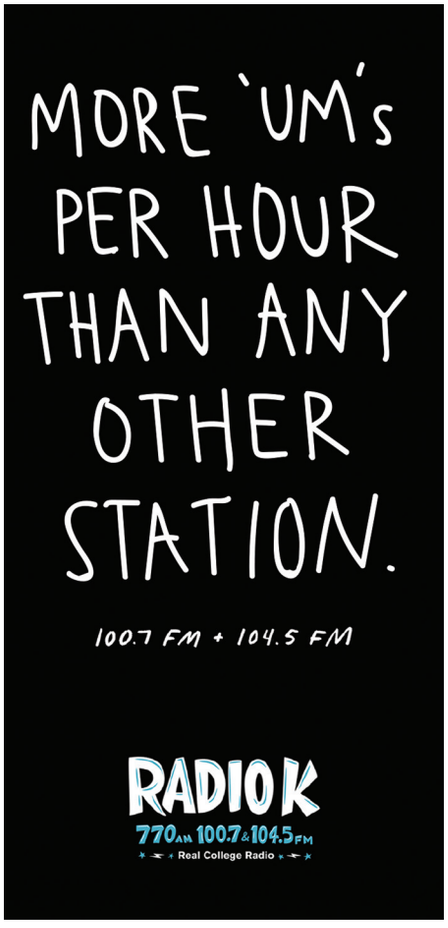
But what exists at a galactic level begs the question of what should happen among humans, where there are rights all members of a society should have, granted to each member of the group and enforced through the agency of caring neighbors. These are rights that enable all — the weaker, poorer, less able as well as the healthy, hardy, and wealthy — to have an equal chance to create a dignified life rather than eke out a bare existence. These human rights include access to drinkable water, breathable air, medical care for the citizenry, and jobs paying wages sufficient to sustain life.

We can do our part by sponsoring, encouraging, and funding existing groups that already assist others, anything that offers the ill and isolated not only concrete assistance, but the additional gift of human connection.

You may feel that an isolated act is hardly worth the effort in light of wrestling with your own busy life, but the giving and receiving of time, the intimacy of a touch or hug, can bestow benefits on you far beyond the moment. ■







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MARCH 2, 2017





























What is TRUVADA for PrEP (Pre-exposure Prophylaxis)?

TRUVADA is a prescription medicine that can be used for PrEP to help reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 infection when used together with safer sex practices. This use is only for adults who are at high risk of getting HIV-1 through sex. This includes HIV-negative men who have sex with men and who are at high risk of getting infected with HIV-1 through sex, and male-female sex partners when one partner has HIV-1 infection and the other does not.

Ask your healthcare provider if you have questions about how to prevent getting HIV-1. Always practice safer sex and use condoms to lower the chance of sexual contact with body fluids. Never reuse or share needles or other items that have body fluids on them.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

What is the most important information I should know about TRUVADA for PrEP?

Before taking TRUVADA for PrEP to reduce your risk of getting HIV-1 infection:

- **You must be HIV-negative.** You must get tested to make sure that you do not already have HIV-1 infection. Do not take TRUVADA for PrEP to reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 unless you are confirmed to be HIV-negative.
- **Many HIV-1 tests can miss HIV-1 infection in a person who has recently become infected.** If you have flu-like symptoms, you could have recently become infected with HIV-1. Tell your healthcare provider if you had a flu-like illness within the last month before starting TRUVADA for PrEP or at any time while taking TRUVADA for PrEP. Symptoms of new HIV-1 infection include tiredness, fever, joint or muscle aches, headache, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, rash, night sweats, and/or enlarged lymph nodes in the neck or groin.

While taking TRUVADA for PrEP to reduce your risk of getting HIV-1 infection:

- **You must continue using safer sex practices. Just taking TRUVADA for PrEP may not keep you from getting HIV-1.**
- **You must stay HIV-negative to keep taking TRUVADA for PrEP.**
- **To further help reduce your risk of getting HIV-1:**
  - Know your HIV-1 status and the HIV-1 status of your partners.
  - Get tested for HIV-1 at least every 3 months or when your healthcare provider tells you.
  - Get tested for other sexually transmitted infections. Other infections make it easier for HIV-1 to infect you.
  - Get information and support to help reduce risky sexual behavior.
  - Have fewer sex partners.
  - Do not miss any doses of TRUVADA. Missing doses may increase your risk of getting HIV-1 infection.
  - If you think you were exposed to HIV-1, tell your healthcare provider right away.
- **If you do become HIV-1 positive, you need more medicine than TRUVADA alone to treat HIV-1.** TRUVADA by itself is not a complete treatment for HIV-1. If you have HIV-1 and take only TRUVADA, your HIV-1 may become harder to treat over time.

TRUVADA can cause serious side effects:

- **Too much lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis),** which is a serious medical emergency. Symptoms of lactic acidosis include weakness or being more tired than usual, unusual muscle pain, being short of breath or fast breathing, nausea, vomiting, stomach-area pain, cold or blue hands and feet, feeling dizzy or lightheaded, and/or fast or abnormal heartbeats.
- **Serious liver problems.** Your liver may become large and tender, and you may develop fat in your liver. Symptoms of liver problems include your skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark "tea-colored" urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, and/or stomach-area pain.
- **You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or serious liver problems** if you are female, very overweight (obese), or have been taking TRUVADA for a long time. In some cases, these serious conditions have led to death. Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any symptoms of these conditions.
- **Worsening of hepatitis B (HBV) infection.** If you also have HBV and take TRUVADA, your hepatitis may become worse if you stop taking TRUVADA. Do not stop taking TRUVADA without first talking to your healthcare provider. If your healthcare provider tells you to stop taking TRUVADA, they will need to watch you closely for several months to monitor your health. TRUVADA is not approved for the treatment of HBV.

Who should not take TRUVADA for PrEP?

Do not take TRUVADA for PrEP if you already have HIV-1 infection or if you do not know your HIV-1 status. If you are HIV-1 positive, you need to take other medicines with TRUVADA to treat HIV-1. TRUVADA by itself is not a complete treatment for HIV-1. If you have HIV-1 and take only TRUVADA, your HIV-1 may become harder to treat over time.

Do not take TRUVADA for PrEP if you also take lamivudine (Epivir-HBV) or adefovir (HEPSERA).



What are the other possible side effects of TRUVADA for PrEP?

Serious side effects of TRUVADA may also include:

- **Kidney problems, including kidney failure.** Your healthcare provider may do blood tests to check your kidneys before and during treatment with TRUVADA for PrEP. If you develop kidney problems, your healthcare provider may tell you to stop taking TRUVADA for PrEP.
- **Bone problems,** including bone pain or bones getting soft or thin, may lead to fractures. Your healthcare provider may do tests to check your bones.
- **Changes in body fat,** which can happen in people taking TRUVADA or medicines like TRUVADA.

Common side effects in people taking TRUVADA for PrEP are stomach-area (abdomen) pain, headache, and decreased weight. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effects that bother you or do not go away.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking TRUVADA for PrEP?

- **All your health problems.** Be sure to tell your healthcare provider if you have or have had any kidney, bone, or liver problems, including hepatitis virus infection.
- **If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.** It is not known if TRUVADA can harm your unborn baby. If you become pregnant while taking TRUVADA for PrEP, talk to your healthcare provider to decide if you should keep taking TRUVADA for PrEP.
  Pregnancy Registry: A pregnancy registry collects information about your health and the health of your baby. There is a pregnancy registry for women who take medicines to prevent HIV-1 during pregnancy. For more information about the registry and how it works, talk to your healthcare provider.
- **If you are breastfeeding** (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed. The medicines in TRUVADA can pass to your baby in breast milk. If you become HIV-1 positive, HIV-1 can be passed to the baby in breast milk.
- **All the medicines you take,** including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. TRUVADA may interact with other medicines. Keep a list of all your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.
- **If you take certain other medicines** with TRUVADA for PrEP, your healthcare provider may need to check you more often or change your dose. These medicines include ledipasvir with sofosbuvir (HARVONI).

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.FDA.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Please see Important Facts about TRUVADA for PrEP including important warnings on the following page.



Have you heard about

TRUVADA for PrEP™?

The **once-daily prescription medicine** that can help reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 when used **with safer sex practices.**

- TRUVADA for PrEP is only for **adults who are at high risk of getting HIV through sex.**
- You **must be HIV-negative** before you start taking TRUVADA for PrEP.

Ask your doctor about your risk of getting HIV-1 infection and if TRUVADA for PrEP may be right for you.

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IMPORTANT FACTS

This is only a brief summary of important information about taking TRUVADA for PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) to help reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 infection. This does not replace talking to your healthcare provider about your medicine.

MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT TRUVADA FOR PrEP

Before starting TRUVADA for PrEP to help reduce your risk of getting HIV-1 infection:

- **You must be HIV-1 negative.** You must get tested to make sure that you do not already have HIV-1 infection. Do not take TRUVADA for PrEP to reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 unless you are confirmed to be HIV-1 negative.
- **Many HIV-1 tests can miss HIV-1 infection in a person who has recently become infected.** Symptoms of new HIV-1 infection include flu-like symptoms, tiredness, fever, joint or muscle aches, headache, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, rash, night sweats, and/or enlarged lymph nodes in the neck or groin. Tell your healthcare provider if you have had a flu-like illness within the last month before starting TRUVADA for PrEP.

While taking TRUVADA for PrEP to help reduce your risk of getting HIV-1 infection:

- **You must continue using safer sex practices. Just taking TRUVADA for PrEP may not keep you from getting HIV-1.**
- **You must stay HIV-1 negative to keep taking TRUVADA for PrEP.**
- **Tell your healthcare provider if you have a flu-like illness while taking TRUVADA for PrEP.**
- If you think you were exposed to HIV-1, tell your healthcare provider right away.
- **If you do become HIV-1 positive, you need more medicine than TRUVADA alone to treat HIV-1.** If you have HIV-1 and take only TRUVADA, your HIV-1 may become harder to treat over time.
- **See the "How to Further Reduce Your Risk" section for more information.**

TRUVADA may cause serious side effects, including:

- **Buildup of lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis),** which is a serious medical emergency that can lead to death. Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any of these symptoms: weakness or being more tired than usual, unusual muscle pain, being short of breath or fast breathing, nausea, vomiting, stomach-area pain, cold or blue hands and feet, feeling dizzy or lightheaded, and/or fast or abnormal heartbeats.
- **Severe liver problems,** which in some cases can lead to death. Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any of these symptoms: your skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark "tea-colored" urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, and/or stomach-area pain.
- **Worsening of hepatitis B (HBV) infection.** If you have HBV and take TRUVADA, your hepatitis may become worse if you stop taking TRUVADA. Do not stop taking TRUVADA without first talking to your healthcare provider, as they will need to check your health regularly for several months.

You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or severe liver problems if you are female, very overweight, or have been taking TRUVADA for a long time.

ABOUT TRUVADA FOR PrEP (PRE-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS)

TRUVADA is a prescription medicine used with safer sex practices for PrEP to help reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 infection in adults at high risk:

- HIV-1 negative men who have sex with men and who are at high risk of getting infected with HIV-1 through sex.
- Male-female sex partners when one partner has HIV-1 infection and the other does not.

To help determine your risk, talk openly with your doctor about your sexual health.

Do NOT take TRUVADA for PrEP if you:

- **Already have HIV-1 infection or if you do not know your HIV-1 status.**
- Take lamivudine (Epivir-HBV) or adefovir (HEPSERA).

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF TRUVADA FOR PrEP

TRUVADA can cause serious side effects, including:

- Those in the "Most Important Information About TRUVADA for PrEP" section.
- New or worse kidney problems, including kidney failure.
- Bone problems.
- Changes in body fat.

Common side effects in people taking TRUVADA for PrEP include stomach-area (abdomen) pain, headache, and decreased weight.

These are not all the possible side effects of TRUVADA. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any new symptoms while taking TRUVADA for PrEP.

Your healthcare provider will need to do tests to monitor your health before and during treatment with TRUVADA for PrEP.

BEFORE TAKING TRUVADA FOR PrEP

Tell your healthcare provider if you:

- Have or have had any kidney, bone, or liver problems, including hepatitis infection.
- Have any other medical conditions.
- Are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.
- Are breastfeeding (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed if you become HIV-1 positive because of the risk of passing HIV-1 to your baby.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take:

- Keep a list that includes all prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements, and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist.
- Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist about medicines that should not be taken with TRUVADA for PrEP.

HOW TO TAKE TRUVADA FOR PrEP

- **Take 1 tablet once a day, every day,** not just when you think you have been exposed to HIV-1.
- Do not miss any doses. Missing doses may increase your risk of getting HIV-1 infection.
- You **must** practice safer sex by using condoms and you **must** stay HIV-1 negative.

HOW TO FURTHER REDUCE YOUR RISK

- Know your HIV-1 status and the HIV-1 status of your partners.
- Get tested for HIV-1 at least every 3 months or when your healthcare provider tells you.
- Get tested for other sexually transmitted infections. Other infections make it easier for HIV-1 to infect you.
- Get information and support to help reduce risky sexual behavior.
- Have fewer sex partners.
- Do not share needles or personal items that can have blood or body fluids on them.

GET MORE INFORMATION

- This is only a brief summary of important information about TRUVADA for PrEP to reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 infection. Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist to learn more, including how to prevent HIV-1 infection.
- Go to start.truvada.com or call 1-800-GILEAD-5
- If you need help paying for your medicine, visit start.truvada.com for program information.

GILEAD

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LAVENDER'S SCORE THURSDAY AT THE GAY 90'S

MARCH 16, 2017





























Lone Star Spirits. Photo by Dan Norman

LONE STAR SPIRITS

Through May 7
Jungle Theater, 2951 Lyndale Ave.
Minneapolis
612-822-7063

Jungle Theater artistic director Sarah Rasmussen once again delights with her signature comedic flair in *Lone Star Spirits*, the crackling Off-Broadway hit, written by her husband, Josh Tobiessen. When Marley (Thallis Santesteban), a young woman who has been living in Austin, returns to the small Texas town where she grew up, she is confronted by her unhappy memories, including Drew (Nate Cheeseman), a high school love and knucklehead who still imagines he is a champion football hero. It's as if ghosts from her past have been made tangible.

Santesteban emanates a condescending edge, along with her somewhat nerdish city-boy beau, Ben (a charming John Catron). Terry Hempleman is absolutely terrific as her good-ole-boy dad, who Marley came to immature conclusions about long before and has yet to have the good sense to revise them. Christian Bardin almost steals the show in an uproarious turn as Marley's friend from youth, Jessica. You could say that Jessica is a force of nature who compels us to reassess our fixed views and just have some fun. Bardin's performance is a real treat! It's also nice to see the small town folks get one-up on the unearned superior attitudes of city-slickers.

GIRL SHAKES LOOSE

Through May 14
Penumbra Theatre, 270 N Kent St.
St. Paul
651-224-3180
www.penumbratheatre.org

When a young woman of color finishes graduate school, she finds that something blocks her opportunities for happiness. As she journeys to discover just what that something is, she finds it within herself. This musical looks into becoming an independent woman who doesn't need a job or another person to define her. A new acclaimed work by Zakiyyah Alexander and Imani Uzuri, with poetry by Sonia Sanchez.

SWEETLAND, THE MUSICAL

Apr. 29–May 28
History Theatre, 30 E 10th St., St. Paul
651-292-4323
www.historytheatre.com

When Minnesota legislators formed the Minnesota Commission on Public Safety in 1917, German immigrants were the largest ethnic group in the state. Despite their numbers, Germans in Minnesota quickly came to be stigmatized by World War I. It is into this atmosphere that a woman came to the Land of 10,000 Lakes from Germany to marry a stoic bachelor farmer she had never actually met.

Sweetland, the musical tells their story with a book for the musical by Perrin Post



Sweetland, the musical. Photo by Rick Spaulding

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

LAVENDER's
Nights at the Theater

A YEAR WITH FROG AND TOAD



Join us for Lavender's Night at the Theater
Thursday, May 11th · 7:00 PM
Children's Theatre Company
2400 3rd Ave. S., Minneapolis

Get 25% off regular ticket price with code LAVENDER online or by phone!
TICKETS: 612-874-0400 or www.childrenstheatre.org

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Lickety Split
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251 3RD AVE S | MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55415

DOWNTOWN INTIMATES
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Thursday, May 11
7pm

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and Laurie Flanigan Hegge. Music is by Dina Maccabee, lyrics are by Hegge. You may be familiar with the title because it is inspired by Ali Selim's beloved Minnesota film *Sweet Land*, and Will Weaver's acclaimed short story *A Gravestone Made of Wheat*. Moreover, Post also directs. You may recall her enormously entertaining Buffalo Gals Productions whose highlights include *Broadway's Legendary Ladies*, *Zombies from the Beyond*, and *Martinis, Girls, and Guns.*

FOURTH ANNUAL Q-STAGE: NEW WORKS SERIES

May 5–14
Intermedia Arts, 2822 Lyndale Ave. S
Minneapolis
www.twentypercent.org

20% Theatre Company Twin Cities continues to provide opportunities for the production of queer-oriented stage work. Two sets of shows reflect on marginalization and the narratives that reinforce that. In Set "A" *The Smitty Complex* by Devin Taylor features an otter who asks the question: "What am I?" It is coupled with *These Floating Bones* created and performed by Nadia Honary. This piece uses film, dance, poetry, and music to find answers to questions about birth, death, and transcendence through movement.

In Set "B" even the way the titles are stated pushes the edges. "_____," written and directed by Sami Pfefeer, is a collaboration with co-director Kai Greiner and performers Beckett Love and Suzi Love. "_____" also plays this set. It is a ghost story that examines cruelty and abuse. Also featured in Set "B" is "*e,*" created and performed by Simone Bernadette Williams and Holo Lue Choy. Two queer trans people of color use an interdisciplinary artistic format to comment on stereotyping of trans-femme bodies (what is described as "the exploitation of queerness and eating disorders' attachment to dysphoria") and ideas about how cis and heteronormative society can silence those who don't align with its binary approach. *"e"* stands for exposure, empathy, estrogen, elevation, enigma, and evil.

LITTLE WARS

May 5–21
Mixed Blood Theatre, 1501 S 4th St.
Minneapolis
800-838-3006
www.primeprods.org

Prime Productions, a new professional theater company, is committed to "illuminate and support women over 50 and their stories through the creative voice of performance." Their inaugural production, *Little Wars* by



Little Wars. Photo by Joseph Giannetti

Steven McCasland, conjures a dinner party or salon, if you will, of some of the 20th century's most brilliant female literary figures: Dorothy Parker, Agatha Christie, and Muriel Gardiner. Others present include Lillian Hellman (Vanessa Gamble), playwright of the groundbreaking lesbian drama *The Children's Hour*, not to mention many other remarkable works and perhaps the most renown lesbian couple of modern times, Gertrude Stein (Candace Barrett Birk) and Alice B. Toklas (Sue Scott of *Prairie Home Companion* fame). It plays at the Mixed Blood Theatre space.

Director Shelli Place shares, "Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas met in Paris in 1907; a flame was ignited and burned for nearly 40 years. Although their companionship was accepted in the intellectual circles of Europe and their 1934 tour of America was lauded, they were always haunted by Gertrude's brother, Leo, describing them as 'abnormal vampires.' They became known for their cultural salons, gathering the likes of Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Picasso, Matisse, and Chaplin among others. It is usually perceived that Alice stood in Gertrude's larger shadow. On the contrary, she took an active part in these literary and art conversations that 'swirled' in the afternoon and went into the wee hours. *Little Wars* provides us an insider's look into a fictional salon held in the French Alps in June 1940."

LA BOHÈME

May 6–21
Ordway Center, 345 Washington St.
St. Paul
612-333-6669
www.mnopera.org

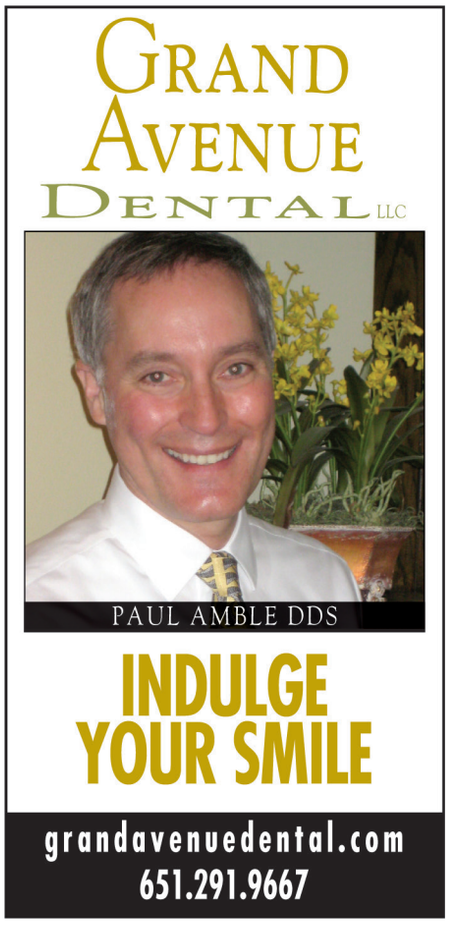
La Bohème, which premiered in 1896, was the Giacomo Puccini opera that gave Jonathan Larson the inspiration for the musical *Rent*. The GLBT community turned *Rent* into an emblematic event with its straight, bi, gay, artistic, and HIV-positive characters intersecting in a crisis situation. *La Bohème* was also remarkably inclusive in its own time when Victorian values ruled Western culture. Bohemians referred to those Paris denizens who lived on the edge as artists who transgressed the norms of the time, including strict sexual norms. This production of *La Bohème* originates from the San Francisco Opera. ■



La Bohème. Photo by John Grigaitis


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LEG DAY, AB DAY, EVERY DAY





Photos by Hubert Bonnet

BY KASSIDY TARALA

St. Paul is a historical gem in the treasure chest that is Minnesota. With the fortunes of Weyerhaeuser, Hill, and Ordway sprawled across the city, St. Paul is home to some of Minnesota's wealthiest, most impressive architecture. Nestled into Cedar Street, The Saint Paul Athletic Club makes yet another stop on the tour of St. Paul's luxurious historical buildings.

Built in 1917, The Saint Paul Athletic club set a new standard in the world of architecture after garnering national attention for being the finest building in over 1,000 miles. Although the construction only took a year to complete, the financial backing was a substantial $1 million in 1917, which historians estimate would cost around $75 million today. However, the construction didn't end there. In 1959, penthouse dining was added on the 14th floor followed by the addition of squash, handball, and basketball courts around 1980. Following all of the renovations, The Saint Paul Athletic Club went bankrupt and abruptly closed in 1989. At an auction, Wallace Orfield, Sr. purchased the club, which sat vacant until Lifetime Fitness became its first tenant until moving out in 2010. Luck-

ily, St. Paul and Commonwealth Properties took this as an opportunity to restore the beautiful monument of history by combining modernization and restoration to create what is now The Saint Paul Athletic Club in 2013.

Today, The Saint Paul Athletic Club boasts 68,000 square feet of facilities including a tiered spin studio, Pilates studio, TRX studio, yoga studio, cardio room, strength training room, executive workout area, massage room, four locker rooms, and a pool. Not only is The Saint Paul Athletic Club great for independent exercise, but it also offers over 40 classes ranging from restorative yoga to fusion, a high-intensity functional training workout. Additionally, executive members receive reciprocity admission to the University Club located on Summit Avenue, which has a workout area, tennis courts, and an outdoor pool.

The Saint Paul Athletic Club hosts several events throughout the year including Member Night, which takes place every Thursday between September and May. These nights typically have a theme, which can range from a wine tasting to a St. Patrick's Day celebration to a





poker night. Additionally, there is a yoga event every solstice, which includes 108 sun salutations in the lobby followed by mimosas and brunch. Monthly events such as Cycle Cinema and Candlelight Yoga are great for people with busy schedules who are interested in working out in an organized group. This summer, The Saint Paul Athletic Club will be hosting a Ragnar team and a Tough Mudder team. For executive members, the University Club will be hosting a Kentucky Derby party on May 6 as well as reggae by the pool throughout July.

In addition to exercise events, The Saint Paul Athletic Club hosts an abundance of catered functions. With a ballroom that seats 330 guests, The Saint Paul Athletic Club is an ideal location for weddings and corporate events. Smaller rooms are also available for strategic planning meetings, board meetings, or brainstorming. All events can be catered by the food and bar service located in The Saint Paul Athletic Club. Two bars are available for members to use at any time, and retail food service will be offered this fall. Executive members are also granted access to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22





Photos by Hubert Bonnet

the University Club deck and poolside dining services, too.

If you're considering becoming a member of The Saint Paul Athletic Club, all you have to do is stop in to 340 Cedar St., St. Paul to apply or get a tour of the facilities, just as guests of Lavender's April First Thursday at The Saint Paul Athletic Club were able to do. Memberships are month-to-month, and applications do have a fee. Although, if you join before May 31 and mention this article, they'll waive the application fee. If you have any questions regarding a membership or The Saint Paul Athletic Club in general, you can call 651-291-SPAC (7722) or visit their website at www.TheSPAC.com.

Although The Saint Paul Athletic Club has experienced its fair share of ups and downs, there is one thing that has remained constant throughout all of these years: its loyalty to the unique history of St. Paul. If you're interested in finding somewhere to exercise, take classes, attend events, or try something new and exciting, joining The Saint Paul Athletic Club might be just what you need. Just don't forget to pay close attention to the intricate architecture that breathes pure St. Paul history. ■

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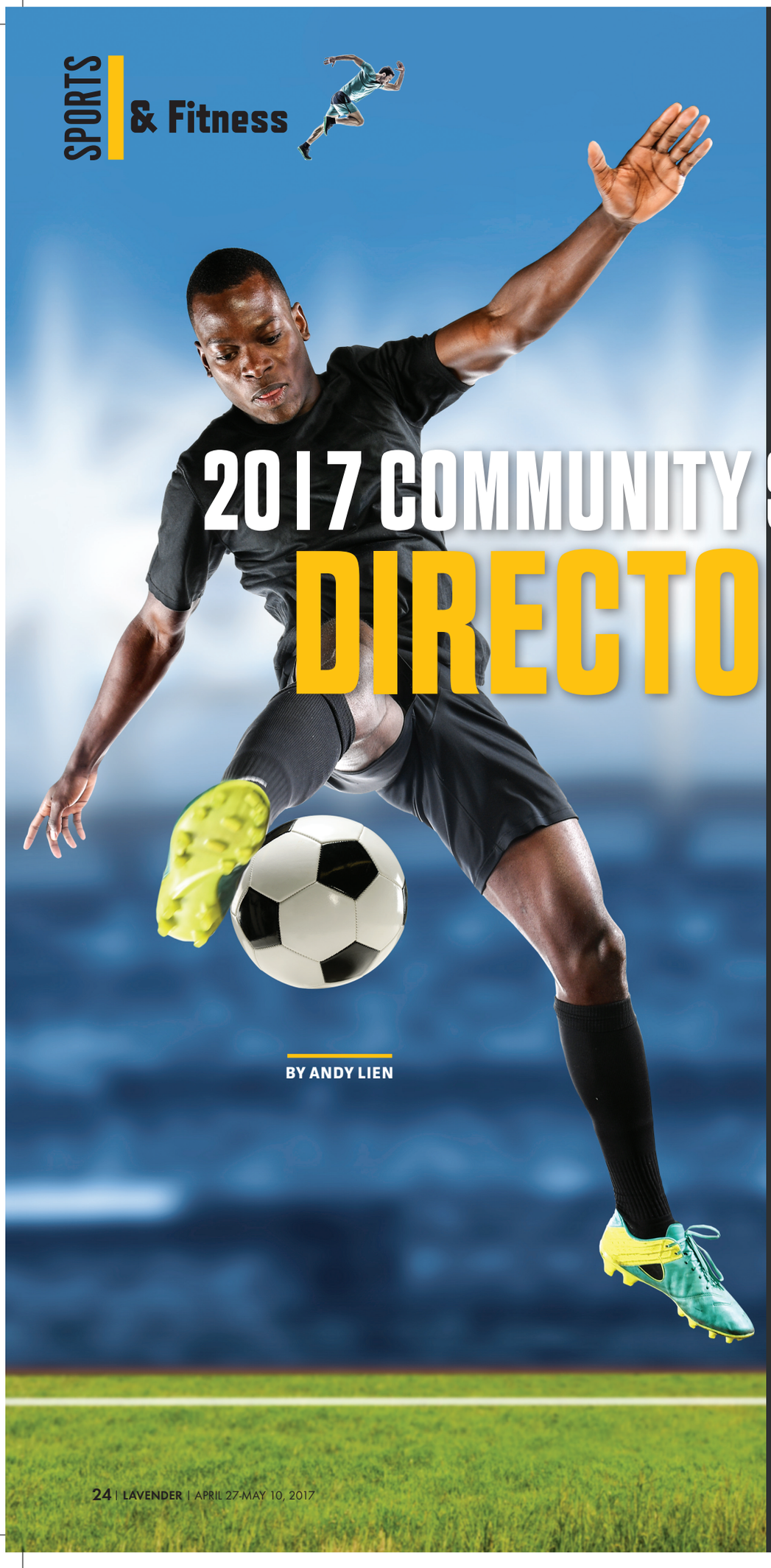
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The Twin Cities area is home to a remarkable number of athletes who identify as members of the GLBT community. The sports range from soccer to basketball to quidditch, the teams are all welcoming and hard-working. Whether you want to join or watch a sport, here's a listing of what's out there and where to find out more about the local sports scene.

2017 COMMUNITY SPORTS DIRECTORY

BY ANDY LIEN

BASKETBALL

Women's Silver Fox Basketball League
Women (age 40+)
GLBT Specific? No
Season: Year-round
Website: www.ywcampls.org/fitness_membership/womens_basketball_leagues

BOWLING

Funday Monday Bowling League
Co-Ed
GLBT Specific? GLBT + Ally
Season: 14 weeks, beginning in Jan.
Website: www.midwayprobowl.com

Hump Day Bowlers
Co-Ed
GLBT Specific? GLBT + Ally
Season: Sept.–March
Website: www.humpdaybowlers.com

Twin Cities Friday League
Co-Ed
GLBT Specific? GLBT + Ally
Season: Sept.–April
Website: www.midwayprobowl.com

Wednesday Rainbow League
Co-Ed
GLBT Specific? GLBT + Ally
Season: Sept.–April
Website: www.facebook.com/WednesdayRainbowLeague

CYCLING

Koochella Racing
Women
GLBT Specific? No
Website: www.koochella.com

FOOTBALL

Minnesota Machine
Women
GLBT Specific? No
Season: April–June
Website: www.mnmachine.com

Minnesota Vixen
Women
GLBT Specific? No
Season: April–June
Website: www.mnvixen.com

GOLF

Womyn's Twilight Golf League
Women
GLBT Specific? Yes
Season: Summer
Website: N/A

HOCKEY

Women's Hockey Association of Minnesota
Women
GLBT Specific? No
Season: Oct.–March
Website: www.whamhockey.org

KICKBALL

Stonewall Kickball Minneapolis
Co-Ed (age 21+)
GLBT Specific? GLBT + Ally
Season: Spring and Fall Seasons
Website: www.stonewallminneapolis.org

OUTDOOR RECREATION

Outwoods
Co-Ed
GLBT Specific? Yes
Season: Year-round
Website: www.meetup.com/Outwoods

QUIDDITCH

TC Frost
Co-Ed
GLBT Specific? No
Season: Year-round
Website: www.facebook.com/tcfrostquidditch, www.usquidditch.org

ROLLER DERBY

TC Terrors — Minnesota Men's Roller Derby
Men
GLBT Specific? No
Season: Nov.–April
Website: www.tcterrors.com

Minnesota RollerGirls
Women
GLBT Specific? No
Season: Oct.–April
Website: www.mnrollergirls.com

North Star Roller Girls
Women
GLBT Specific? No
Season: Nov.–April
Website: www.northstarrollergirls.com

RUGBY

Mayhem RFC
Men
GLBT Specific? GLBT + Ally
Season: April–Oct.
Website: www.mayhemrfc.com

Minnesota Valkyries Rugby
Women
GLBT Specific? No
Season: Aug.–June
Website: www.valkyriesrugby.org

RUNNING/WALKING

MSP Frontrunners
Running
Co-Ed
GLBT Specific? Yes
Season: Year-round
Website: www.mspfrontrunners.org

Prime Timers MSP
Walking
Older Men
GLBT Specific? Yes
Season: Year-round, first and third Saturdays each month
Website: www.primetimersww.org/ptmsp

SOCCER

Twin Cities Jacks
Co-Ed
GLBT Specific? Yes
Pick-up: May–Oct., League play: Year-round
Website: www.tcjacks.org

SOFTBALL

Northern Lights Softball League
Women
GLBT Specific? Yes
Season: May–Aug.
Website: www.facebook.com/nlwsl.twincities

Twin Cities Goodtime Softball League
Men
GLBT Specific? Yes
Season: April–Aug.
Website: http://tcgsl.leagueapps.com

TENNIS

GLASS Tennis
Co-Ed
GLBT Specific? Yes
Season: Year-round
Website: www.glassports.org

VOLLEYBALL

GLASS Volleyball
Co-Ed
GLBT Specific? Yes
Season: Year-round
Website: www.glassports.org



KICKING THE WALLS DOWN

BY KASSIDY TARALA



Photos by Jen J. Lindquist

The rush of running across the playground until your lungs are burning and your blood is boiling with adrenaline. The thrill of finding the perfect hiding place that will, without a doubt, lead you to a win in an intense game of hide-and-seek. The squeak of your swing as you pump your legs back and forth faster and faster until you are flying through the air, the blast of wind the only sound you can hear.

The feeling of childhood is one that is unmatched by any other. As a child, the fun is endless, the problems are small, and the world is a delicious mystery that you can't wait to devour. So why let that feeling be masked by the responsibilities and stress of being an adult?

There's no reason to let the simplicity and carelessness of our youth slip through our fingers as we grow older. Stonewall Kickball is a big supporter of embracing our childhood long after it's over. Originating in Washington D.C., Stonewall Kickball came to Minneapolis in the fall of











2016 with the help of Joshua Crosson, commissioner of Stonewall Kickball Minneapolis. "I started with Stonewall Kickball as a player and team captain for LGBTQ Congressional staffers in Washington, D.C. Our team, the First Ladies, went on to have five consecutive honors as Miss Congeniality, a truly 'fundefeated' team," says Crosson.

When Crosson arrived in Minneapolis, he was shocked to find that there was no LGBTQ kickball league, so he immediately made it his new mission. About to start their second season, Stonewall Kickball has become a large part of the LGBTQ community in Minneapolis. Crosson says, "Last season, Stonewall Kickball Minneapolis had over 160 players, and there's always room for more. We honor diversity in all forms and celebrate each and every player for what he or she brings to our league. Even for those who aren't able to kick and run around bases, they can still join a team and be part of the camaraderie of winning, losing, and everything that comes after."

Not only is Stonewall Kickball beneficial for the players, but it also gives back to the community. Sponsored by The Saloon, GAME Bar, and *Lavender*, Stonewall Kickball supports and is supported by, the LGBTQ community through and through.

The teams of Stonewall Kickball typically meet on Sundays for what they've dubbed their "Sunday Fundays." Additionally, fundraisers and social events are held throughout the year. Stonewall Kickball aims to recreate the memories made during third grade gym class while sponsoring philanthropic events that give back to the community of Minneapolis.

If you're over 21, enjoy kickball, and want to feel like a kid again, Stonewall Kickball might be the perfect group for you. Stonewall Kickball has created a welcoming environment that has zero tolerance for bullies. "We welcome folks to come as they are, and extra credit if you can kick and run in heels," Crosson says.

Not only is Stonewall Kickball notorious for reconnecting participants with the youthful freedom of playing games on the playground, but it's also a great way to meet new people. "One player confessed that he didn't have a lot of friends after moving to the Cities a couple years ago for work. After joining Stonewall Kickball, he's met more people and made more friends than what he'd imagined," says Crosson.

The adrenaline, the excitement, and the wonder of our childhoods don't have to be things of the past. In fact, they just might be stronger now more than ever before. Hold on to your wondrous spirit, your love for adventure and your appreciation of the simplest moments in life. By joining Stonewall Kickball, you'll fit in by standing out.

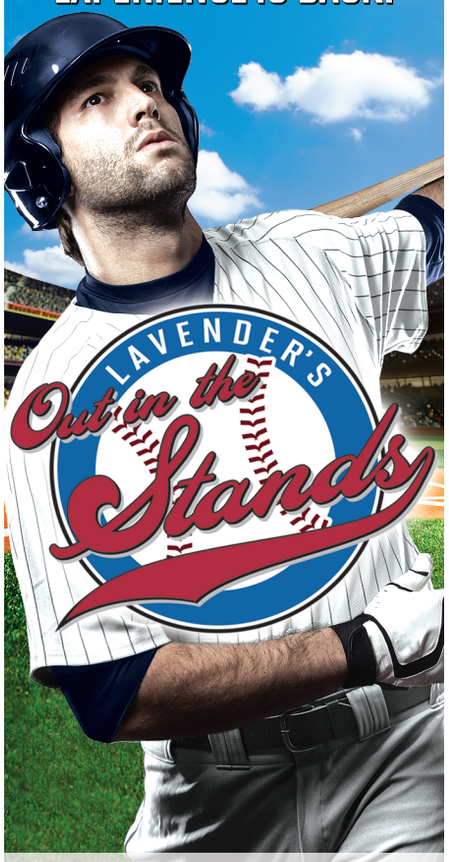
Crosson says, "We believe every person should have the ability to feel comfortable being oneself in organized sports. Our league values each player for who they are and what he or she brings to the community. We also believe organized communities have the ability and responsibility to support others in need." ■

For more information about becoming a participant of Stonewall Kickball, visit the website at www.stonewallminneapolis.org or send an email to minneapolis@stonewallsports.org. If you're interested in getting involved in upcoming events, check out the Facebook page at facebook.com/groups/skminneapolis or Instagram at instagram.com/stonewallkickballmpls.





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BUMP AND GRIND

DR. PAMELA GONZALES TAKES ON THE BEAUTIFUL GRAVEL ROADS OF NORTHERN MINNESOTA

Photo courtesy of TMBimages.com

BY TERRANCE GRIEP

It's like the Tour de France but with more mosquitoes. It's like *Walden* but with less symbolism. It's like *Brokeback Mountain* but with fewer sheep. It's the second annual running of Le Grand du Nord Gravel Cycling Classic, and it's grinding its way toward the present.

According to the event's website, "Le Grand represents one of the most amazing gravel courses in the United States. Starting out of Grand Marais, Minnesota's spectacular harbor, the route climbs to a breath-taking view of the U.S./Canadian border." That breath will be taken, in many turns, on Saturday, May 27.

The event is presented by Heck of the North whose founder and director, Jeremy Kershaw, says that he "has watched The Heck of the North transform the lives of people who have not necessarily identified as 'athletes,' including some pretty inspiring women." One of those inspiring women (who is very much an athlete) is Dr. Pamela Gonzales, a pediatrician specializing in addiction medicine in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Minnesota.

What drew Gonzales to Le Grand du Nord was "mixing physical challenge with experiencing the beauty of Minnesota." The physical challenge part is starkly obvious: cyclists circulate through the northern hinterlands on gravel arteries that wend and wind for a full 100 miles and culminate at a height of 6,000 feet. Such travails might discourage other riders, but they only serve to drive Gonzales toward self-styled greatness. Says she, "Long events are both challenging and energizing."

Despite its length, or perhaps because of it, Le Grand du Nord is not officially a contest, but compulsively competitive riders sometimes go into business for themselves, according to Gonzales's experience. "It's a race for some people," she observes. "They can't help themselves."

As with the operation of any finely tuned machine, fueling a distance cyclist's body is is no small consideration. Such is the case with Gonzales as she rides, but in a way most of us can only dream about. "I burn a lot of calories just sitting still," Gonzales says. "Cycling makes it worse. Anything longer than three or four hours, and l need to get protein and fat calories mixed in. I try to eat as much real food as possible, but I am not turning down pizza or another cookie, ever."

This fueling can factor into the 100-mile journey itself. "Keeping myself properly fed and watered is also challenging," Gonzales points out. "This event is relatively short, compared to ultra events, so for me, there aren't any mind tricks that come into play. I'm energized by hours alone. Solitude recharges my battery."

The event's solitude, however, can sometime prove imperfect in the best way possible. Gonzales explains, "It's a good mixture of solitude, but [cyclists are] still looking out for each other. When coming upon another rider on the side of the road, and someone asks, 'Do you have everything you need?' they mean it and are ready to stop and help."

Preempting the need for such help involves training of a nearly monomaniacal scale. "Cycling, and more cycling," Gonzales reports. "All my training is cycling-specific, including core and strength work."

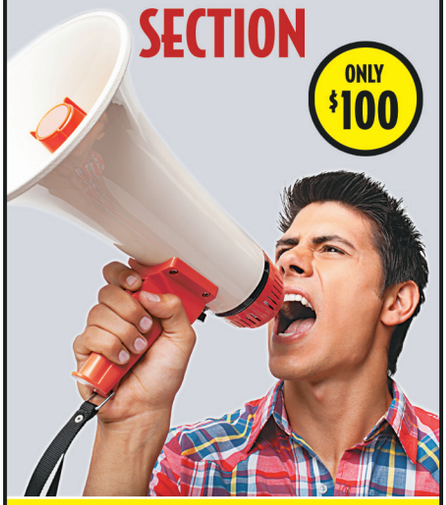
In addition to these considerations, Gonzales also enjoys the advantage of familiarity, as she attended last year's inaugural version of Le Grand du Nord. Her recollections are reminiscent of an Impressionist painter's shades and tints. "I did participate in the first," she remembers. "It was foggy, which I thought was a visually enjoyable way to take in the landscape. This year could be different if there isn't fog, as [event director] Jeremy Kershaw purposely put in a tiny detour to a scenic overlook last year. He's purposeful about the challenges and vistas."

Although Gonzales can easily be counted among Le Grand du Nord's inspiring women, she finds that becoming an inspiration often begins with being inspired. "If you want to spend more challenging time on a bike, and want to see beautiful spaces in Minnesota," she concludes, "this is definitely an event to check out." ■

For more information about Le Grand du Nord, go to www.heckofthenorth.com/le-grand-du-nord

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THE LADY IS A CHAMP

CHAMPION JACKIE FENDLER BREATHES NEW LIFE INTO HER EXISTENCE VIA THE DEADLIFT

Photo by Tony Coduto

BY TERRANCE GRIEP

It's November 2013, and a lifter is about to lift. Feet are planted beneath shoulders, toes are pointed due north. Open hands descend beneath knees, then lock onto the knurled iron bar with a matching iron grip, over and under. Clavicles hover parallel to the bar which is complemented on either side by metal plates: 181 pounds of entropy, all told. The lifter doesn't notice that the iron bar is as cold as a corpse.

That cold flutters upward on vulture's wings as the lifter's shoulders rise. The icy bar caresses shins, knees, and thighs, while hips thrust forward pneumatically. The base of the lifter's neck drips acid, or seemed to, its tickling trickle burning gluteus, hamstring, calf, and heel from the inside out.

The weight is returned to the floor with a clatter that sounds like cosmic cymbals striking together. The spandex-clad assemblage laud the effort, the success, the transformation: the lifter is no longer merely a lifter. She is Jackie Fendler, affectionately nicknamed "The Hammer" by her many friends and admirers, and, at age 65, she has become the World Association of Benchers and Deadlifters divisional champion.

That transformation was perhaps the most significant phase of a journey that had begun less than a year before and continues to the present day. "When I joined the gym, I was 64 years old, and I felt out of control of my life," Jackie Fendler remembers. "I was much heavier than I am now, eating poorly, and not only not in good shape, but not in any shape at all. I felt tired all of the time, and everything seemed difficult."

During her third gym session, Fendler's trainer suggested she enter a weight lifting contest, and, although Fendler didn't take the proposal seriously at first, it served as a first destination for her accelerating fitness Odyssey. She says, "I worked hard, complained a lot, and finally, after about six months, really made a commitment to working out."

That commitment, and the competition it invited, compelled Fendler and her trainer to put one exercise into the very center of their competitive cross hairs. "We chose the deadlift because it is probably the best overall exercise you can do," she asserts. "If you have a good trainer, you can really progress."

Finally, the object of her ten-month-long focus arrived. "I did enter that first contest, and I think I only lifted 181 pounds, but it was an enormous victory, and a great present to myself for my 65th year," Fendler recalls. "I was, of course, very nervous at the contest, and a bit confused about what to do between lifts, but I did it!"

Some competitors might be tempted to take the medal and run, but Fendler still competes regularly, and, as she does, her network of friends and allies ever widens. "At my last meet, there were lifters ages six to the 90-year-old who lifted successfully," the champ says. "And everyone cheers for everyone else. It's a great atmosphere of love and support."

That atmosphere clings to Fendler in her life away from the iron arena. "Interestingly enough, the journey has also been somewhat spiritual for me," she reports. "I have come to like myself even more, I've become kinder to myself and others, and I really like what I'm doing. This has spread throughout many areas of my life, including work. I think the better you feel about yourself, the more successful you can become in all areas of your life."

Now Fendler has nudged the crosshairs of competition from a single exercise to the very center of her existence. About putting in time at the muscle factory, The Hammer declares, "I do other things less so that I can afford it, like going to first run movies at night and eating out. I save where I can so that I can get to the gym. It's where my money goes, and it's worth every penny." ■

For more information about Jackie's gym, go to www.bodiesbyburgoon.com.

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RIDE REVIEW | BY RANDY STERN | PHOTOS BY RANDY STERN

2018 Chevrolet Equinox









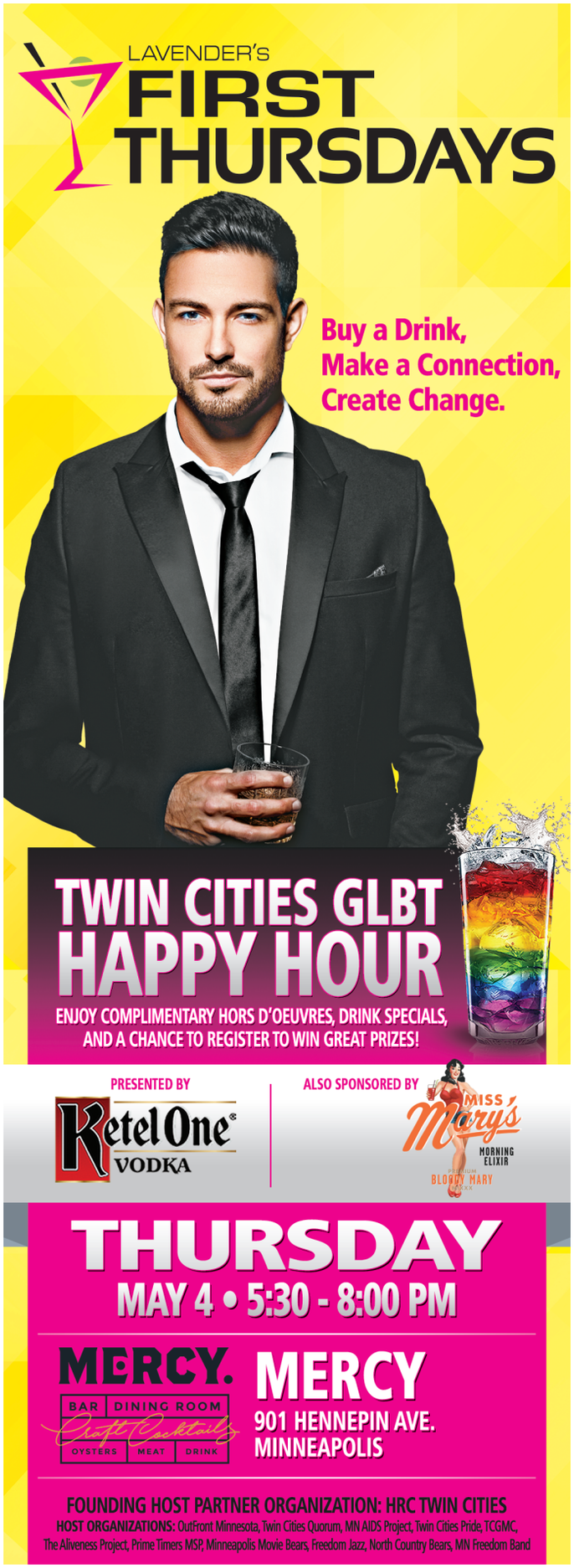
It was definitely time for a change.

When we last reviewed the Chevrolet Equinox, we pointed out a couple of important pieces to the story. It has been one of the drivers in sales for Chevrolet. But, what we observed was that it was aging in the face of newer products that offered more style and equipment. Not that the Equinox lacked these things, but it did offer solid value and excellent interior space and versatility.

Meanwhile, Chevrolet went to work on an all-new Equinox. They knew that making a vehicle that remained a "stand out" in design with the right mix of versatility, technology, and safety would make the Equinox more competitive in the hottest automotive segment in this country.

Recently, we had the opportunity to drive the all-new 2018 Chevrolet


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Equinox in the upcountry section of South Carolina into the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. What we came away with was not just finding "new roads," but an all-new approach to the compact SUV.

The first thing we noticed was its vastly improved and sharper design outside. There is a new brand formula for Chevrolet, with sharper lines, concentrated headlamps, a trimmer lower grille, all leading to a sharpened silhouette, including a bend on the side glass at the rear door. The third glass on the side may look familiar to Equinox owners, but it, too, has been sharpened up. The rear end is a radical departure with the tail lamps going horizontally into the tailgate. The tailgate itself offers new textures, as well.

The visual similarities and differences between the "old" and "new" Equinox become obvious when the tape measure is applied. It is now shorter than the previous Equinox; a bit over five inches in the wheelbase and four inches in overall length. The 2018 model shrank by an inch over the 2017 model, while retaining the same width overall. These dimensions are now closer to size of the leaders in its class, namely the Honda CR-V, Nissan Rogue, and Toyota RAV4.

Worth noting is the new Equinox's weight loss of 400 pounds compared to the previous model. This is significant news that will help this SUV's cause.

These comparisons continue inside of the cabin. While cargo space was reduced by two cubic feet when the second row seats were up, overall cargo space remained the same. Overall passenger volume increased by more than three cubic feet. This translates into a more practical and usable space for passengers and their goods.

Our two testers were the top-of-the-line Premier model, which offered a higher level of luxury than before in an Equinox. It comes down to additional USB charging ports, in particular in the LT and Premier models, and other additions to equipment. There is a cleaner cabin layout that follows new Chevrolet design conventions with a new "floating" touchscreen on top of the center stack and a much cleaner instrument binnacle with a larger and more informative center TFT screen.

Front seats offer improved comfort for fatigue-free driving through our lengthy drive routes. These testers had full-power seats with rake, recline, front, and rear cushion height and lumbar adjustments. Our Equinox Premiers offered a two-tone jet black/brandy upholstery set-up with leather seating and trim on the dashboard. Rear seats were fine, but missing is the rake adjustment from the previous generation. Otherwise, seat comfort and space in the rear was right for even taller passengers.

You expect a Chevrolet to be fully connected between the MyLink infotainment system, OnStar, and its 4G LTW Wi-Fi connection. There is also Apple CarPlay and Android Auto connectivity, as well.

Under the hood of both testers was the standard 170-horsepower 1.5-liter turbocharged four-cylinder engine. Both testers had a six-speed automatic with front-wheel drive. All-wheel drive is also available. It felt great on most roads, but this driveline did struggle on on-ramps. While climbing the mountain on the interstate highway, its 203 pound-feet of torque worked hard to get it up and into Asheville. We saw fuel economy range within the mid-20s MPG, hitting a noted high of 27.7 MPG.

The 1.5-liter engine is the initial offering on the Equinox. Later in this model cycle will be the addition of a more powerful 2.0-liter turbocharged four-cylinder and a 1.6-liter turbocharged diesel.

One thing we noted while driving the 2018 Equinox was the auto stop-start feature. It seems that Chevrolet was able to make it work without any notice. One will not feel it, and can barely hear it work. However, we were unable to find an easy way to turn this feature off in the Equinox.

Along our route through both South and North Carolina, we were presented with an excellent mix of roads. They ranged from narrow side streets to majestic winding mountain roads, including a section of the famed Blue Ridge Parkway. This mix of roads truly provided a serious test of the driving dynamics on the 2018 Equinox.

To our surprise, the 2018 Equinox exhibited major improvements in handling and cornering. It was poised and well-mannered through these twisty switchbacks and country byways. The ride quality was superb, though road noise was present on rougher surfaces. It handled potholes without much feedback to the cabin.

The steering is quite good, with great road response to the wheel and solid action down at the rack. However, it did feel a bit loose and vague when keeping things straight. The brakes are fantastic. Though we did not do any panic stop testing, we liked how the system stopped. We wished the pedals were a bit more offset for our taste.

The one big step for the 2018 Equinox was the expanded availability of active safety features. Surround Vision is all new, taking a further step from beyond a rearview camera. Forward collision alert is coupled with General Motors' Safety Alert Seat, providing multiple responses to avoiding accidents. These are just to name a few features available on the 2018 Equinox.

Pricing for the 2018 Chevrolet Equinox starts at $23,580 for an L model. Our Premier testers came with an identical sticker price of $37,935.

We thoroughly enjoyed finding "new roads" in the 2018 Chevrolet Equinox. It is an enjoyable vehicle to drive and offered plenty of advances and refinements that will make it more competitive in this hot segment of compact SUVs. The new Equinox also represents a huge advance from previous models, offering a lot more in terms of efficiency, safety, and technology in a slightly smaller package.

Is this 2018 Equinox enough to sway consumers set on the product leaders in this hot segment? The Chevrolet's advantages alone should make a dent on sales of its rivals. It is matter of giving it a good drive to determine this. Maybe, you can "find new roads" in the process of buying or leasing one. ■







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DATELAND | BY JENNIFER PARELLO

The Honeymoon Is Over

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"I've long known your heart, my love," I said. "And, now, I will know your colon."

And then the orderlies came in and wheeled her out of the room.

I'm writing this in a hospital room while my spouse is getting a colonoscopy. This procedure is one of the presents you get on your 50th birthday. You get your AARP card in the mail and a prescription to have a tube shoved up your butt.

Up until recently, I've avoided getting to know the colon. If I had met the colon at a cocktail party, I would nod at it politely and then spend the rest of the evening avoiding eye contact for fear of being locked into conversation with this glum and tedious organ.

Anytime I hear the colon mentioned, it's always associated with bad news. It is frequently described as "spastic," "irritable," or "intolerant." I imagine that its peevishness makes it a social outcast among the body's sexier and less-cranky organs.

I just read a description of the colon that made me think of it in a different light, though. The following minor bit of poetry comes from the brochure I was given when I entered the waiting room: "The large intestine, also called the colon, is part of the final stages of digestion. It is a large tube that escorts waste from the body."

It makes the colon seem like a southern gentleman, mercifully taking the arm of an ugly duckling that no one wanted to dance with, and gracefully waltzing it to the exit.

I want to think of the colon as a friendly gent. A helper who only wants the best for me and my loved ones. But I don't trust the colon. Four years ago, it killed my mother. So, no, I don't trust it at all.

Public service announcement: colon cancer is one of the few cancers that can be detected early through regular testing after age 50. So, as much as you don't want to have a tube shoved up your butt, it's stupid not to do it.

Even though this is a routine procedure, we've been nervous about my spouse undergoing it. It requires the use of an anesthetic designed to lull you into "twilight," a word that can be interpreted as romantic or a harbinger of imminent decline, depending on your outlook.

Before my spouse was carted away, I was told that the doctor would visit me after the procedure to explain the findings. My spouse would be too stoned on propofol to comprehend the news.

"Isn't propofol the drug that killed Michael Jackson?" I asked brightly.

When faced with a health crisis, I find it comforting to connect the health issue to a celebrity. I inherited this weird trait from my mom. When my uncle was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, my mother's first response was an awestruck: "That's what Jackie Kennedy had!" Then, when a physician delivered the grim news that my mother had stage four colon cancer, my mom brightened for a moment when I asked the doctor, "Isn't that what Audrey Hepburn died from?"

Just now, a doctor walked into the room to report on my beloved's nether-regions. He beamed as he showed me pictures of my spouse's colon. "Just a couple of benign polyps," he said. "Nothing to worry about. But I have a question. How long have you been married?"

"Three months," I said. "Why do you ask?"

"Well, she'll be very, very gassy for the next few days," he said. "So the honeymoon is officially over." ■



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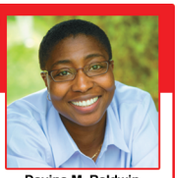
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ADVERTISER INDEX

Adult
DB Graphics 17
Megaphone 41

Apparel & Accessories
Costumes Plus 39
Twin Cities Leather & Latte 8

Arts & Entertainment
Children's Theatre Company 64 17
Lavender's Night at the Theater .. 17, 39
Well Strung 17

Automotive
Borton Volvo 27
LaMettry's Collision 31
Rosedale Chevrolet 38

Bars & Nightlife
19 Bar 29
The Commodore Bar & Restaurant 3
Gay 90's 28

Beauty & Relaxation
Omni Plastic Surgery 9
Waxing the City 6

Beverages
Lowry Hill Liquors, Lakeside Wine & Spirits 23

Dating Services
The Love Architects 7

Event Venues
Prestwick Golf Club 22

Events
Lavender's Out in the Stands 29
Lavender's Score Thursdays 35
Lavender's Summer of Pride 2

Financial
Wells Fargo Bank 5

Funeral Services
Choice Cremation 33
David Lee Funeral Homes & Cremation Services 33
Washburn-McReavy Funeral Chapels & Cremation 31

Health & Wellness
Dr. Paul Amble, DDS 19
Bodies by Burgoon 33
China Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine 31
Linden Hills Dentistry 5
Mill District Dental 7
PrEP 12, 13, 14
Right at Home 33
University of Minnesota, Infectious Diseases 43

Home Services
House Lift Remodeler 6
Puustelli USA 9
Select Surfaces 8
Standard Heating & Air Conditioning 39
Zen Windows 10

Insurance
Bartell, Dawn 6

Jewelry
Max's 10
Scheherazade Jewelers 19
Wedding Day Diamonds 44

Legal
Unique Estate Law 31

Media & Communications
Radio K 770 10

Optical
Origins Eye Clinic 22

Real Estate & Rentals
Ruzick, Amy & Johnson, Kay 19

Restaurants
Al Vento 22
Burger Moe's 23
Can Can Wonderland 17
Jakeeno's Pizza & Pasta 22
Mercy 7
Red Cow 23
W.A. Frost and Company 3

Sports & Recreation
Minnesota Twins 25
Osseo Power Sports 29
Spirit Mountain 28

Travel & Accommodations
AC Hotel 5

Wedding Resources
Burbank Livingston Griggs Mansion ..3
The Commodore Bar & Restaurant 3
Hotel 340 3
Saint Paul Athletic Club 3
Stout's Island Lodge 3
The University Club of Saint Paul 3
The Woman's Club of Minneapolis 9

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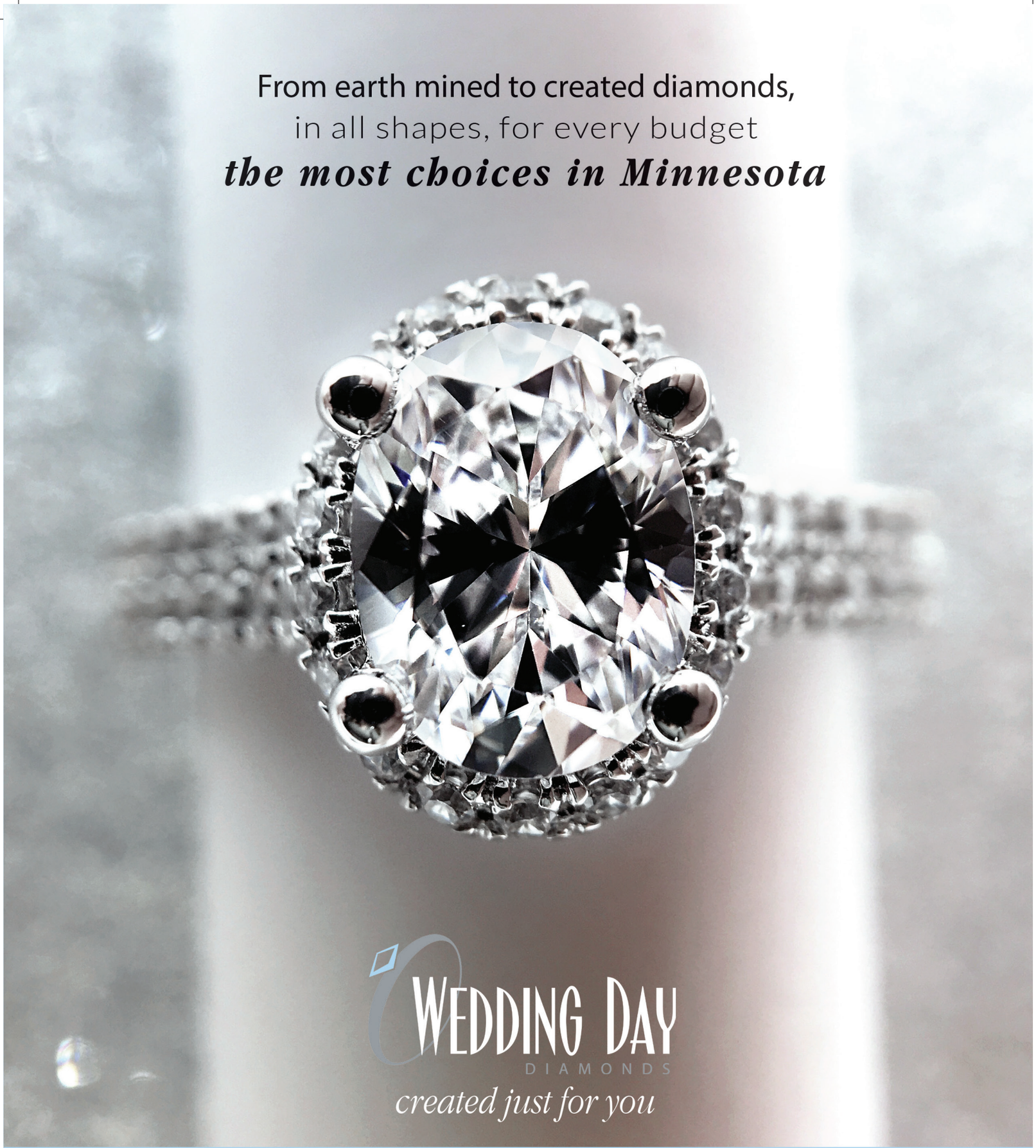
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